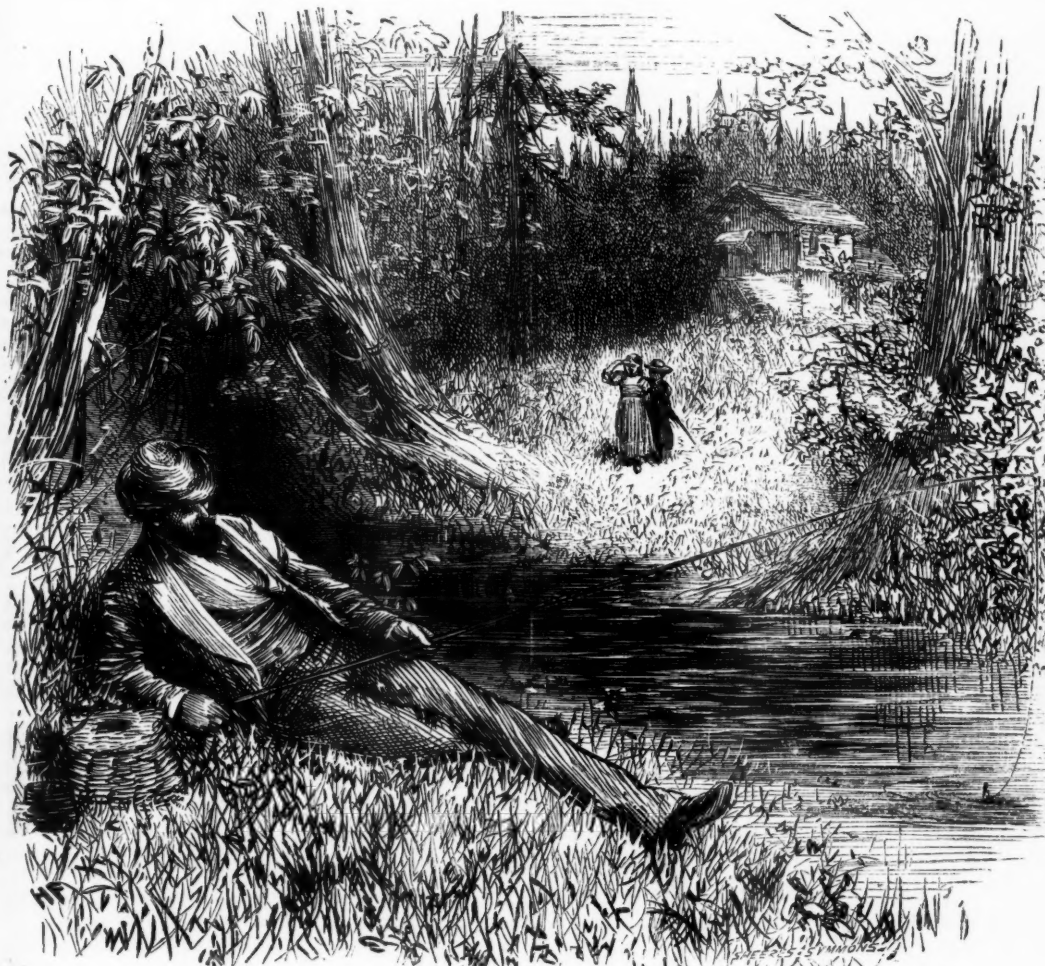


THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—Cooper.



IL PENSEROSO.

CROSS CURRENTS.

CHAPTER XVI.—THE JOURNEY.

IT was now the beginning of June, and the travellers were to start on the morrow. Piers had not drawn back from the engagement to accompany his aunt. Hope's presence, displeasing at first, he had come to regard with indifference. The desire was now strong upon him to regain sufficient health to recommence somewhere and somehow the

battle of life—the sterner the more attractive for him, for the softer colouring had paled or vanished for ever. At the age when love, if it comes at all, is serious and real, developing the best that a man has in him, and not a romantic fancy, Piers discovered that he had given the pure ore for the purchase of a counterfeit. The heart which had left him true, fond, and trusting, was thrown back bruised, betrayed, and despised. The resting-place to which, amid disappointment, mortification, and pain, he

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

turned as a future solace had failed him in the hour of greatest need. In his dark days, both mental and physical, through which he had to struggle, there glimmered but one light—maternal love; and that, however steadfast, is rarely enough for the path of men. To be the shield and protector of his mother is a satisfaction to many a good son; to rest under her shadow, content with her self-sacrificing affection, is a condition that independent manhood abhors, nor would it meet with our admiration were it otherwise.

Mrs. Stanmore's jest to send him to the diggings gradually became a hope and object in the future. It was not the life he would have chosen in prosperity, but it might be the best that remained for him. A few months' rustication in the mountains, and he might be fit for a life of action, which, whatever its hardships, would be better than the stagnation of interest and energy in which so much time had been passed.

With this prospect before him, Captain Ashworth made his own preparations for departure, and watched those of his friends with improved good-humour. He even assisted Hope, on whom the greater labour of packing devolved, to choose and arrange the books that were to go with them. Yet for all this he did not regard her one whit more favourably than before; but, what was of more consequence, Hope had recovered her natural elasticity, and did not care whether he did or no. She had her task, and heartily threw herself into it. To tend, to cheer, and brighten, if possible, Ada Lester's life was her present object, her pleasure as well as her aim. Hither and thither she flitted, helping wherever she was wanted; folding, packing, laughing, and singing, bearing messages and executing commissions with exactitude and tact. Mrs. Ashworth was able to have her to herself at last.

"My dear little Hope, you will write me long letters from Switzerland; one or two short ones on the journey perhaps; but often when you are settled at Bellerive. I shall like to hear how the day is spent, what you see and what you think, and how Piers is."

"He will tell you that best himself. He is never communicative to me, and would at any time rather be silent than have me for a listener."

"True," said Mrs. Ashworth, abstractedly; the old puzzle puzzled her still, her son's unaccountable antipathy to Hope. "It is precisely about him that I wish to talk to you. He surprises me in many ways. I believe him still to be under the dominion of—the past," said Mrs. Ashworth, after a moment's hesitation for a word; "and the heart and judgment are in a measure diseased. He is not kind to you, his little playmate of olden times. I see it, regret it, but can neither understand nor help it. He will give no explanation nor hear any remonstrance. It may be from your relationship to Clarice—I cannot tell; but, whatever the cause, I ask you to forgive him for my sake."

"I have nothing to forgive," said Hope, dropping down beside her friend, and laying her cheek caressingly on her hand. "Captain Ashworth does nothing to offend me, he only does not like me; surely you cannot think I should resent that."

"I cannot understand any one disliking you," observed Mrs. Ashworth; and truly the intelligent face and loving nature looking out of her soft brown eyes did not present a picture to explain dislike.

"Will you forgive Piers?" repeated Mrs. Ashworth; "and be kind to him when it lies in your power, even if he is unkind to you?"

"What can such a small thing as I do that would in any way be of service to Captain Ashworth?" asked Hope, forcing a laugh to conceal the awkwardness she felt under this strange request.

"You can replace my watchfulness with your own. Remember, you will be leading a kind of family life together!"

Hope recollected how persistently Captain Ashworth marked her off as not belonging to the family circle, treating her always as an indifferent stranger.

"You can by degrees act the part of a sister to a sick brother," pursued the lady. "Remonstrate with him when he is imprudent, bear with him when he is irritable, be patient and forgiving when he is cross, gentle when he is froward, and—perhaps cheer him a little when he is ill. Promise me that you will try, my darling, and a mother's blessing will accompany you wherever you go."

If Hope had spoken the feeling of her heart it would have been—"I don't like this charge, and I don't know why," little guessing that her reluctance proceeded, not from pride or resentment, but from a more powerful cause—the instincts of womanhood breaking through the crust hitherto enveloping her girlish feelings. She was willing to be kind, but not to force her kindness; she was ready to be serviceable, yet not to offer her services; she was glad to do anything to please Mrs. Ashworth, anything but this.

"I am so ignorant of the life to which Captain Ashworth belongs," she answered, in a tone of apology. "He regards me as a mere child."

"Be but sisterly in your conduct to him; a child-sister if you please, but be kind to my poor irritable Piers! If he had really a sister like you, even-tempered and cheerful as you are, she would, I think, gradually bring him round. Warm sunbeams continually falling upon the same spot melt the hardest places at last; and when the winter soil is broken, the green plants will spring up again. So is it in life, dearest. It is my daily, I may almost say hourly, prayer that my son may not only recover his mental as well as bodily health, but that he may live to be a good man; and then, whatever his worldly career, I shall see all for the best, and my grey hairs will go down to the grave with joy. He is little better now than a nervous hypochondriac. Bear with him, Hope, for my sake, and do him all the good you can. I love you very dearly, as my own child, my darling; will you not do this for me until Piers recovers? He is stubborn in his displeasure against Ray, Clarice, yourself, and life in general, but that is not his natural disposition. Forgive him if you find him morose—he has been greatly tried."

"Yes," murmured Hope, touched by the anxious yearning look in the widow's eyes.

"If you would tell him that it is your wish—" began Hope.

"That would develop all the porcupine nature at once, and nullify every attempt at kindness. It must be the work of your own goodness of heart, the result of tact and watchfulness. I do not ask much; only, when you can, supply a sister's place."

Hope gave the promise required, and then wondered uneasily over what might be expected of her, and what might constitute the sisterly conduct to

which she was pledged. Her first attempt in the new character was in the journey, and its result was not very encouraging. Very hot and very dusty was the dreary route from Boulogne to Paris, with the compartment full, and the temperature so stifling that, notwithstanding dust and grit, every window had to be down. Piers's seat was particularly exposed to this inconvenience. Hope's was not, and she began to think that as the situation was likely to hurt his eyes, it would only be a sisterly act to change places. Her momentary hesitation disappeared as she saw him suddenly shrink, as if hurt, put his hand to his eye, and then take the ominous shade from his pocket. Belton, a large, strong woman, whose principal duty was to attend on Ada—Mrs. Stanmore being as independent of the services of others as Hope herself—was asleep. There was no help from her. Her large hands were folded over her waist, and her head was helplessly hanging forward, with the mouth half open, which gives such a stupid look to the heavy sleeper. To wake her up sufficiently to make her comprehend how very undesirable it was for Captain Ashworth to remain where he sat, and to induce her to offer an exchange of places, was not to be thought of. Mrs. Stanmore, not much better off herself, was carefully reading through a packet of letters, and knew nothing of what went on around her. Convinced that this would be a sisterly act, Hope raised her voice and spoke from the other end of the carriage.

"That is a bad place for you, Captain Ashworth, will you change places with me?"

He was adjusting his shade, and did not appear to hear, so that she had to repeat her offer. This time he heard, and lifting his head looked at her from under his shade, but with what expression she could not tell, that and the moustache pretty well concealing the face. Judging from the cold measured reply, "Thank you, I see no reason for taking your place," it was not a grateful one.

Satisfied that she had done something to please Mrs. Ashworth, Hope turned to enjoy the view from the window.

"A forward little busybody," thought Captain Ashworth.

Soon Ada, fidgeting and restless, drew her attention.

"You are getting very weary, I fear; suppose you were to try and sleep."

As she spoke, Hope glanced round to see what could be done to make her friend more comfortable. No one seemed able to render her any assistance, so, relying on herself, with her usual decision and independence, she mounted on the seat, and dragging a roll of shawls from the net overhead, placed it comfortably under Ada's feet. No one could be much with Hope without in some way profiting by her presence. "At leisure from herself," she was full of thoughts and plans for others, with a large heart in her small frame, and an understanding sufficiently strong to regulate it. No one could have appeared to more advantage than did Hope throughout the travelling. In spite of Piers's discouraging manner, she did not forget her promise to Mrs. Ashworth, nor lose an opportunity of performing it, and that with a simplicity and freedom from all embarrassment against which even his surliness was sometimes obliged to give way. With Ada it was a service of love. Save for the oft-returning reflection that this gentle life, withered at the core, would never

grow into maturity, Hope was always happy. Existence was now a higher state of being. At "The Bury" all was so practical. The struggle to make both ends meet left little time for mental culture, nor was there the taste for the high range of thought in which Ada delighted. Her pleasure was to employ, as usefully as she could, her limited span, and to cherish a perpetual flow of love and gratitude to her Heavenly Father for all his mercies. To hear her talk, she was only going home before bearing the burden and the heat of the day; a little earlier freed from care and suffering; a little earlier than many called to wear the crown—the gift of her loved and compassionate Lord. As Christianity, like water passing through different soils, retains something of the qualities peculiar to the character it permeates, there must be variety in its development, though the leading features remain the same. Whether active or passive, the motive power will work from the same centre—the love of the creature to the highest Source of Good. Where love flourishes happiness springs, and in proportion to the invariability of the one is the solidity of the other. Happy Ada, though orphaned in early life, often weary, sometimes ailing, yet ever loving and thankful, writing her mercies in large letters, her troubles in small ones; she possessed an habitual serenity that many might envy, were not the road by which she reached it open to all. Her secret was that spontaneous return for benefits received, which, in centuries long past, brought such cheering commendation to a daughter of Israel from lips whose utterances were more than honour, more than life, "She loved much." Ada was one of earth's loving ones. She loved the service she had chosen in her heart, and with a warmth and reality that gave her an abiding sense of rest. Some shrink from this manifestation of tender feeling towards their God and Saviour as being too familiar, but they must read their Bibles to little purpose who thus dissociate the Giver from his gifts. What more logical than that He who gave the affections should desire to become the principal object of them, or that He in whom we live and move should be unwilling to abdicate his claim to our service?

"My son, give me thy heart," means more than the cold assent of the understanding to the first great commandment, on which all the others are made to hang. So long as it is a mental process alone, the love we profess is but a cold, wintry gleam that neither cherishes nor cheers, and has no more power to make us happy than have the scant sickly rays of the fast declining year to ripen the fruits of earth. "Give me thy heart" is a call for it as it is, with its hopes and its wrestlings, its errors and sorrows; with its weakness for good, its strength for evil, its throbbings of passion, and its yearnings for truth. It is the invitation of the one great Physician who healeth all diseases. Would we but comply and bring this poor human heart of ours, alien and cold as it is, as the offering of obedience, when we can do nothing more, what showers of healing balm and joy would descend from an inexhaustible storehouse upon many a mourner's path!

CHAPTER XVII.—GHOST STORIES.

A SUMMER passed amid the soft slopes of the Jura is not likely to be fertile in stirring incident. The long or rounded outline of its regular hills is suggestive of peaceful repose and sylvan enjoyment, and contrasts somewhat tamely with the bold array of Alpine

peaks which awaken more enthusiastic admiration, and stimulate the hardy and adventurous to exertion and toil. No spot, however, can be better for invalids requiring good air, and calm, wholesome amusement. The days as they passed wrought a favourable change in the two that accompanied Mrs. Stanmore to Bellerive. The mountain breeze had tinted Ada's cheek with a browner hue, and Piers had become so far strong that he sighed for employment as the most likely means of completing his cure. His sight was weak, but he could read and write for a limited time, and, when tired, might have had a willing helper had he wished it. The proud bearing of the soldier had not entirely left him, though he would frequently subside into listlessness or into moody grief.

His favourite amusement was fishing. On the banks of the river which flowed down the valley, about ten minutes' walk from the long rambling hotel in one wing of which they were located, he spent the greater part of his time whilst remaining with Mrs. Stanmore. Solitude was more agreeable to his state of mind than society; that is, the solitude in which he indulged, peopled with phantoms of his own creation, and filled with bitter thoughts—a soul-wasting struggle with memories and murmurs he was indisposed either to banish or restrain. Persistently he dwelt upon his misfortunes—his lost grade, profession, and his life, so far as its glory was concerned; his love—against this last his spirit rose in repudiation: there were other and better things in the world than a woman's love, he thought, with lofty disdain, lashing his musings into self-contempt that he had ever attached so much importance to anything so brittle and unstable. It was not so much its decay as the time and manner of its withdrawal which stung so sharply, he often told himself. His vigour and hope of obtaining any distinction were both gone, sacrificed in an instant, and irremediable. What had the future in store which would not be overshadowed by that painful past? He could never be again the man he once was. He had nothing to offer, little to give, if his thoughts ever again centred on a domestic hearth. His affection, should it ever rise from the dust in which it had been trampled, would be a burden wherever it was placed. He did not like the hard cynicism that encrusted him, but made no effort to shake it off. It grew and grew until he was sometimes shocked and distressed at the unkindly feelings he both cherished and expressed.

With all these moody tendencies in his disposition, fishing was the last occupation he should have chosen. Mrs. Stanmore and Ada often told him so, and frequently raised a storm of argument and contradiction, which generally ended in a playful recommendation from the latter to go away for a few days, as he usually returned more cheerful and companionable after the excursion.

"What are you going to do to-day, Captain Ashworth?" Ada asked the question as he was walking restlessly up and down the large primitive apartment serving them for an eating-room as well as saloon, when they took their meals in private, he having been more than unusually irritable at breakfast that morning.

Piers glanced through the window towards the dark water flowing calmly under the overshadowing branches, and replied, "The day is favourable; I shall go to my fishing."

"Fishing—always fishing. Is it not an idle occu-

pation for a man?" said Ada, emphasizing the last words.

"I will catch something for your luncheon, Miss Ada, and oblige you to change your opinion. I do not call mine an idle occupation; it is sometimes a very serious one to me."

"Are you aware of the result of spending the day in company with your fishing-tackle? that you are silent at table when you might make yourself more agreeable by talking, that you are cross to Hope, and contradict your aunt? In fact, Captain Ashworth is more like a fractious child than—Hope, help me to a simile."

Hope, who was replacing on the table the different articles that had been displaced for the breakfast preparations, quietly filled up the sentence as she set down the inkstand, saying, "Than the son of his mother."

"Am I cross to you?" asked Piers, standing in her way as she moved forward to bring something else. "I don't mean to be cross; why should I to such a little thing as you?"

"No; why should you?" replied Hope; yet she knew that any kindness he could trace to her met with an ungracious reception. Part of her promise to Mrs. Ashworth had not been required of her; Piers was not ill, nor did he, so far as she knew, need any injunction to prudence. The sisterly bond was a failure in some respects, and weak in others, yet Hope conscientiously bore it in mind, doing what she could without attracting attention. She studied his habits, and contrived to put what he wanted within his reach; his books and papers were carefully preserved always in the same place, and accidents prevented by a watchful removal of brittle or dangerous objects from his dark side. At table she systematically took that place, and unobtrusively spared him many an unlucky contretemps which his partial blindness would have caused. All this Captain Ashworth saw, and with a perversity that little Hope never suspected, put his own construction upon it. He was not conceited, but he was inconsistent and prejudiced; besides, where is the bachelor, honoured with the attentions of the other sex, to whom they are not more or less dimly the shadows of speculations on his liberty?

"Hope and I have been talking of Saighières," continued Ada; "we have been reading the old legend, and, whether she believes it or not, she would like to visit the castle. Have you no wish to see the ruin and encounter the ghost? We hear that he walks about in a long black velvet cloak, which is sometimes gathered round him tight and small, at others trails for yards on the ground. Have you no curiosity to see the sight?"

"The little I had is already satisfied. I have been up the hill twice since we came to Bellerive, and my only recompense was broken wells, some black flagstones, a fine, but not an uncommon view for this part of the country on one side, and a deep precipice on the other, with a torrent thundering below. There were a few mischievous-looking goats about which might have explained some of the stories afloat had I questioned them. I wonder the murderous count did not pitch his brother into the ravine rather than bury him among the foundations of the castle."

"But that would have finished the tragedy at once, and there would have been no ghost-walking among the ruins. Why did you not tell us that you were going? Hope would have given her little ears to

have a chance of meeting his lordship—in company; I do not think she desires a tête-à-tête.”

“Had she told me—” began Piers, and stopped both in his walk and in his sentence.

“She did ask Belton to go with her, and I believe the old soul thinks the story true; and, moreover, that some punishment will befall the curious explorer of the count’s ménage and antecedents. I think Belton would do anything for Hope but that. Perhaps I might go with you, Hope. Mr. Hauser was talking to me about trying a new saddle. The donkey carries me very well: I was not very tired the last time I rode it. I should like to see the ghost as well as Hope.”

“Dear me, Miss Ada! you are never going to run such a risk,” said Belton, who, entering the room at that juncture, had heard the subject of conversation. “I don’t believe all I hear; far from it,” continued she, with an expression of face wherein a world of wisdom was hidden; “but all the same, I would not have you go up there for anything. Where there is smoke there is fire; something lies at the bottom of the story, be sure of that.”

“But which of the two brothers walks about?” asked Hope, “the one that was killed, or the jealous one that killed him?”

“You had better not ask too much,” returned Belton, mysteriously, pursing up her lips and keeping them tight together lest some unwary word should escape without permission.

“Why not?”

“It would never do for me to tell all I hear. I pick up strange bits of talk sometimes.”

“But, Belton, you may misunderstand; you can’t speak French, you know,” observed Ada.

“I can understand English, Miss Ada, as well as you can. Some of the couriers who bring their families to lunch here speak as good English as I do, and are polite enough to speak to me in my mother tongue. Mrs. Hauser, too, speaks English, and does not quite like all she hears. I know very well what they say—you need not go up to the old castle to look after a ghost.”

“We have not one here, surely,” exclaimed Hope, showing her white, ivory teeth as she burst into a merry laugh; “that would be too good.”

As Belton pressed her lips together, and looked unutterably wise, the young ladies became more intent upon making her talk.

“You are trying to mystify us in order that we may forego the visit to the castle, but you will not succeed. We have ascertained that it is scarcely more than an hour’s walk by the shortest way. I can ride on the donkey—I am feeling pretty well to-day—and Miss Hope will think nothing of the walk. We shall go this afternoon; we want to see the real ghost. Yours is a sham one; indeed, we altogether doubt his existence.”

“Ah, but it is true,” replied Belton, quickly. “He occupies two of the lower rooms at the end of the old building, and in the middle of the night he sometimes goes groaning for an hour or two, and then, after washing his hands, which are stained with blood, he disappears.”

“And what becomes of the water? Has that disappeared also the following morning?” asked the practical Hope.

Belton was puzzled. Interested sufficiently in the tale to remember and store it up for repetition when she returned home, she had not attempted to sift it,

and was glad when Ada came to her relief, saying, “You forget, Hope, that the water, like the ghost, must be invisible by daylight. If any traces remained, it would cease to be supernatural.”

“And the gentleman is to be seen in this very house?” asked Hope.

“In this very house,” said Belton, with a nod of satisfaction, which soon gave place to ludicrous alarm. “There now, I have done it. Mrs. Stanmore told me not to repeat the story to you, but you young ladies have got it out of me. I hope you won’t believe it.”

“Certainly not,” replied Hope. “I might believe in a shadow flitting about, but the hands are the difficulty—to be always washing them; once washed would be enough.”

“Yes, if it were real blood,” answered Belton, gravely.

“Then you believe the story,” cried both the girls together.

Belton did not like to pass for being less sensible than themselves, and defended herself from the charge. Captain Ashworth, who for a few minutes had been leaning over the balcony, contemplating his favourite river, stepped into the room, and inquired the cause of this general merriment.

“Did you know that we have the distinction of being domiciled with a ghost, and that we are all, Belton included, much alarmed?” said Ada, playfully, her sweet face all smiles instead of fears, as she turned it towards him.

“What is this?” Captain Ashworth addressed himself to Belton, the only serious one of the party.

“They do say so, sir,” she replied, half afraid of being laughed at.

“A ghost that moans at night, and washes his hands, and then disappears. He comes into the old part of the building,” explained Ada.

“And you believe it, Belton?”

“Well, no, sir; I can’t say that I do,” said Belton, smoothing down her apron so that not a plait could get out of place, “but I should like to be civil to it. I won’t say that such a thing is impossible, for I should not like to be *made* to believe it.”

“That is, you do not wish to meet with proofs—you have no desire to be convinced through the evidence of your senses.”

“No, sir. That is just what I do mean. Who can say that there is no such thing? It would be unbecoming and presumptuous; the Almighty can do what he likes.”

“And you think it would be consistent with Almighty wisdom to let a poor fellow wander over those old, tumble-down rooms, disturbing the sleep of honest folk with the moans and groans of a troubled conscience, for your ghost has always done something that prevents his resting like others in his grave. Would it not be wiser and more just to keep him shut up where he could not do any more mischief?”

“There is truth in that, sir—I don’t deny it; but I would rather not say that I don’t believe in ghosts.”

“On the same principle as the Norwegian peasants speak of the devil as the gentleman in the fur coat, confounding him with the bear, and afraid of his injuring them if they are uncivil.”

“The ghost that comes here with the blood upon his hands must be the count of the castle, who killed his brother,” said Hope, so seriously that Belton’s evident belief in the suggestion made them all laugh.

"True, my dear," replied Ada, "but we will have nothing to say to him. He is the bad man; we will go up to the castle and pay a visit to his brother."

"And see the black velvet cloak," pursued Hope.

"Now, pray, Miss Hope, don't talk so lightly," entreated Belton. "If such things are, it is my belief that you would not like to see them more than I should."

"I hear the old weather-vane often creak at night when the wind comes up the valley," said Captain Ashworth. "For a short time there is a dismal sort of groaning, which subsides after a while, but while it lasts it is not unlike the voice of a child that has become hoarse after a violent cold."

"That may explain the moanings of the ghost below; but how about the hands stained with blood?" said Ada.

Belton, who did not really relish the demolition of her supernatural story, and its dissolution into the regions of plain sense by an ordinary explanation, looked rather gratified by the difficulty that remained.

"I once knew a case rather similar," said Captain Ashworth. "When in Spain, I and several others were lodged in an old locanda, part of which had gone to ruin like the farther end of this hotel, and had never been repaired, probably for the same reason, that it was more advantageous to make a fresh building than to prop up a falling one. The ghost was exorcised before my time, but he had held his own for a long while. He was more dainty than many, and only appeared on moonlight nights, and always with his throat cut, and a red handkerchief bound round it. Of course there was a history attached to him. Some ancient memory dragged from its recesses a recollection of having heard that once upon a time a former proprietor had killed himself in a fit of drunken despondency. This was, of course, the hero of the nocturnal disturbance; the story got about, and was generally believed. A young man staying there, hearing the tale, offered to beard the ghost in his den the first time he appeared. One night he was awoke out of his sleep with the announcement that the nocturnal visitant was in the ruin, and his throat all bleeding as usual. When conducted to the spot, he was made to look through the broken shutter of a windowless room, and, true enough—"

Captain Ashworth broke into a laugh, his auditors, especially Belton, who stood with eyes and mouth open, were listening with wrapt attention. All the world over, young and old have a hankering after the supernatural. Notwithstanding that two out of the three listeners would have indignantly repudiated the charge of giving any serious credit to the story, they could not conceal their interest.

"True enough, what?" said both of them.

"Do you believe what I am telling you? It is true as the hills," said Captain Ashworth, purposely lingering in his narration; "Belton believes, I see she does; and you too, young ladies, sceptical as you would be thought, you have your misgivings. Don't deny it; and you are right. What I am telling is a fact. Where was I? Ah! true enough, there was a dark figure in a distant corner, tall, tall, immeasurably tall, and thin too. The young man looked hard, the figure looked back upon him in the same way. By dint of straining his sight he saw clearer, and the moonlight, which only entered by the aperture from whence he gazed into the dark-

ness, grew a little stronger, and penetrated farther. There was a queer, hideous, cavernous face fronting him, quite immovable; and, yes, there was the red handkerchief all saturated with blood."

Belton groaned audibly; she was thankful that the ghost of the Bellerive was only marked on the hands.

"You do not expect me to believe this?" said Ada.

"I do, every word of it."

Piers paused, either to tantalise his hearers or else to take breath, and then went on. "The young hero, nothing daunted, declared that he would oust the old gentleman from his perch. Bursting open the half-closed shutters, which fell forward with a crash, throwing the broken splinters in all directions, a noise too unearthly for any human being to have uttered came from the distant object, and almost immediately a large handsome black turkey-cock flew rustling and gabbling from a high projection in the wall, where he was roosting, into the face of the young man, alarming him by his noise and angry babble far more than the ghost had done. I need not add that the exorcism was complete; but you may be surprised to hear that the stranger got no thanks for his valour. The inhabitants of the place were unwilling to part with their ghost. I suspect it would be the same thing here, and that if the assassin count turned into a barn-door fowl, the discovery as well as the discoverer would meet with small gratitude."

Captain Ashworth was right in his conclusion. More enlightened people than the villagers of Bellerive do not like to see the legends of past centuries torn to shreds, nor the ruthless testing of old tales by the laws of probability. Many can remember with what a pang of regret they heard the existence of William Tell questioned for the first time, and the consequent retreat into fableland of the well-imagined history of the apple, shot from his son's head, and the father's spirited reply, when asked by Gesler the destination of the remaining arrow. The stone where he leapt from the stormy lake to liberty, the stream in which he was ultimately drowned, lose all their interest as the fact becomes known that among the archives of Switzerland there is not a single record that such a man ever existed. It is a pretty romance, and nothing more.

THE MARCH OF THE ANTS.

"YOU talk of the march of an army, eh? Well, the march from Metz to Paris and the Khiva expedition were great feats in their way; but I've seen a march in my time that no army on earth could equal, though it had ten Napoleons at its head."

"You mean locusts? Well, they keep their ranks well, as I've had occasion to see out in the East."

"They do, indeed; but I don't mean locusts."

"Wild fowl, then? A flight of them passed me one night on the Don, just after sunset, that took ten minutes to pass, and not a single flaw in the whole column."

"Aye, I can quite believe that; but I don't mean them either."

"What then?"

"I am going to tell you. You know Praia Ver-

melha, four miles from Rio de Janeiro? Well, I had a house there a good many years ago which had belonged to a Portuguese before I got it, and was naturally as dirty as any house could well be. Every corner and cranny was thick with dust, and the whole place, from top to bottom, was a regular public asylum for cockroaches, tarantulas, and other things that needn't be mentioned. My first idea, of course, was to give it a thorough cleaning up as soon as possible, but it was fated that the cleaning up should be done for me, in a way that I little dreamed of. I was sauntering about my garden one morning before going into the city, waiting for my horse to be brought round (for in those days the tramway from the town to Praia Vermelha, round Bota Fogo Bay, wasn't made or thought of), when, all of a sudden, two or three of my niggers, who were at work a little way off, came scampering towards me, shouting, 'As formigas! as formigas!' (the ants! the ants!) I ran to the spot, and there I *did* see a sight. The whole bed on which they had been at work was literally creeping with black ants, which were pouring by thousands through a crevice in the foot of the wall; and when I looked over into the lane, there was the long black line traced out against the white dusty road as far as I could see. The breadth of the column, as I measured it later on, was good ten inches; as for the length, you'll hear about that by-and-by.

"Well, what was to be done? The creatures were coming on as fast as they could go, and evidently towards the house. Plainly there was no time to be lost; so I got a broom and went to work with a will. Every stroke swept them away by thousands, but I might as well have tried to stem Niagara with a mop. The moment the column was broken, the masses in the rear scattered themselves like skirmishers, took up the trail of the vanguard in a moment, and restored the line so quickly that it seemed as if I had been scooping in a running brook. Plainly there was nothing to be done *that* way; so I shouted to Juanita, the mulatto cook, to bring me a kettle of boiling water.

"And then began a massacre if you like. Every splash littered the ground with their carcasses for yards round, and I began to hope that I had checked them at last. Not a bit of it. The rear rank scrambled over the corpses of their comrades, and came on over the scalded ground, through steam and heat and all, like the forlorn hope at Badajoz. I was just giving them the last drop from my kettle, and wondering what on earth to do next, when a shout from behind made me look up, and there was old Señor Bonito, my next door neighbour, leaning over the gate.

"'What are you doing, señor?' cried he, opening the gate and coming in; 'you're killing your best friends. This is what we call a benção (blessing).'

"'And a nice sort of blessing it is!' retorted I, indignantly. 'Do you think that I shall be particularly blest if these creatures get in and eat all my furniture?'

"'But it's not the furniture that they want; they won't hurt the house a bit. What they're after is the beetles and tarantulas and their eggs, which are the favourite food of the black ant. You see, when a house gets dirty, and full of vermin, the ants march in and make a clean sweep of them, like policemen hunting the vagabonds out of a town, and that's why we call it a "blessing."

"'Oh!' said I, beginning to understand at last. 'Then this invasion is a sort of amateur house-cleaning, eh?'

"'Just so; and a very thorough one it will be. When you come home to-night you won't find a single beetle or tarantula in the whole house.'

"'And where on earth does all this lot come from?'

"'There,' said the Brazilian, pointing to the summit of the Corcovado (Hunchback), which stood up against the sky like a great black steeple, far away at the end of the valley.'

"'What!' cried I, staring, 'do you mean to tell me that this swarm comes from the top of that mountain?'

"'Every inch of the way,' answered my friend, decisively; 'and not a single break in the whole column, I'll be bound. You'll see bigger swarms than that, though, if you remain here a year or two.'

"I opened my eyes, as well I might, for this was a new thing altogether. From the spot where we were standing to the top of the Corcovado must have been two good miles at least, and most likely a great deal more; so, if you calculate how many ants there are in a breadth of ten inches, and multiply that by a length of two miles, or upwards, you'll have some idea what a march it was.

"'Come in and watch them at work,' said the Brazilian, taking me by the arm. 'It's a sight well worth seeing, I can tell you.'

"It was, indeed. Juanita and the two niggers, who were well accustomed to these domiciliary visits, had thrown open all the doors, and the whole house was creeping with ants from top to bottom. If the famous picture of 'The Persecution of the Jews under Torquemada' had been painted in those days, I should have thought of it at once, though I doubt whether the alguazils of Toledo ever made half such quick work of it as my new visitors. Every moment some fresh battalion filed off from the great column, plunged into an untouched corner or crevice, and ransacked it thoroughly, coming back immediately, as if for fresh orders, and all as regularly and orderly as soldiers on parade. And then to see the scamper of the beetles, and cockroaches, and tarantulas, and all the rest; and every now and then one of them would be overtaken by the pursuing host, and over he would go on his back, with hundreds of merciless jaws at work upon him all at once. Here and there in a corner you could see some old veteran, too stiff or too hopeless for escape, sullenly awaiting his doom, like a Roman senator. It was the march of Attila and his Huns over again.

"'They won't leave a single corner unsearched,' said Señor Bonito, who seemed to look upon their performance as complacently as if they all belonged to him, and had come there at his especial invitation. 'See there, that gang have scented some game up yonder!'

"As he spoke, a long line of ants darted up the mosquito-curtain of a bed near which we were standing, and the next moment flop down came a huge tarantula, big enough to smash a hundred of them with his mere weight. But the giant had no chance. He had hardly touched the ground when they were upon him from every side like a pack of wolves, and in less time than it takes to tell it, he was torn limb from limb, and hundreds of the little imps were towing off his dismembered claws in every direction.

"You'll see just the same thing at Paramaribo, in Surinam, if you go there," said the Brazilian, nodding his head approvingly. "There's a species there which the people call 'Ants of Visitation,' because they only come once in two or three years; but when they *do* come, they make a clean sweep of the whole settlement, just as they're doing here. The people do not mind their coming, and throw open the houses to them, and take the greatest care not to molest them—which, indeed, is just as well, for if any one disturbs them, they fall upon him without mercy, and their bite will draw blood even through a stocking."

"They must be larger than these, then, surely?"

"They are, rather; though even *these* will bite clean through a canvas shoe. I've seen them do it myself. As for their nests, I've seen ant-hills in Surinam more than six feet high, and at least a hundred feet round."*

"Just at that moment (rather to my chagrin, for I was beginning to get really interested in watching the progress of the devastation) one of my blacks came up to say that my horse was at the gate, and away I went to the city. When I came back, about five in the evening, there was not an ant to be seen; the invading armies had vanished as suddenly as they came. The only token of their passage was the shell of a cockroach, or the hard end of a tarantula's claw, lying here and there about the floors. It was just Bishop Hatto and the rats over again; and I think my visitors 'did judgment' quite as thoroughly as his."

HOW TO AMUSE THE BABIES.

EVERY mother who has babies of her own, and every one who has other people's babies to mind and care for, is aware of the fact that when a baby is wide awake it must and will be amused. It is not only necessary for the peace of the household, but promotive of the health of Miss or Master Baby, to amuse him, or her, as the case may be. It awakens the intelligence of the child, it exercises its limbs, and all the muscles of those limbs, for baby is a very demonstrative person, and his delight is expressed by a great deal of gesticulation. Even crying has some compensating good in exercising the lungs, but laughter is always useful by promoting the general circulation and digestion in particular.

For the wee-wee earliest young, sounds alone suffice, as with the triangle in our picture. Without any instrumental aids, animated movement, tone of voice, and manner, make up the chief attraction; but babies of two or three years old generally have a keen perception of the humorous. They criticise from a different point of view from what we do, and they see fact and fiction in a totally different light, a vaster range of being than in after years is true and real for them. Babydom is a world separate from ours, and comparatively few amongst us have power to understand baby language, to sympathise with baby thought, and still less to compose works or use language with sufficient merit to meet the approval of baby censorship. Few, if any, of us remember how we thought and felt, and from what point of view we regarded such things in our own child days. Success in amusing or interesting

* Startling as these measurements may appear, they are fully borne out by Steadman and one or two other travellers.

is best gained by observation of what things have most effect on young imaginations. The keenest touch of wit, the rare tit-bits of fun contained in baby games and rhymes, seem to most grown people arrant nonsense. But happy he or she who can enter into the fairy world of the little ones, and bring the bright light into their little eyes and the rosy smiles on their dimpled cheeks, and the merry laugh from their musical voices. There is more art and merit in composing a single nursery rhyme, with the genuine ring about it, than in stringing together a whole sensational novel, or in writing volumes of verse such as the critics call poetry in these days. What intense fun and amusement always exists in the juvenile mind in "Pat a cake, pat a cake!" Can any baby resist bursting into a merry peal of laughter invariably when it comes to "mark it with B"? or fail to go into a fit of uproarious fun when the little pig "cried tweek! tweek! tweek!" in the game of the three little pigs?

Then there are nursery rhymes that embody romances of thrilling interest, and contain deep unfathomable mysteries for the child when it first begins to think. Never was I tired, when I was a little one, and could find some willing knee to transform into a horse, of the rhyme-story of "Ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross." In the first place, "ride a cock-horse" was an enigmatical sentence. I knew what a horse was, but a cock-horse must be some wonderful quadruped. Secondly, Where was Banbury Cross? I never received a satisfactory answer. My direct question was always subtly evaded. I was told "it was at Banbury, of course." It was patent, even to my dawning intelligence, that this must be a diplomatic answer, and that no one knew, any more than I, the geography of Banbury Cross. Thirdly, "To see an old lady get on a white horse." Why was the old lady going to get on the white horse? She had some deep reason of her own, and especially for doing so at Banbury Cross. There was a mystery in that which no one could fathom. Why should I go, specially mounted on such a wonderful beast as a cock-horse, to see her? It must be a very grand sight to make it worth all this fuss and flurry and ceremony. Did the old lady go in procession to Banbury Cross, like the coloured picture of the procession of Queen Victoria that rolled in and out of a painted box resembling a Brobdingnag yard-measure? How did the old lady get on her horse? There must have been something remarkable in her way of doing it that people should go to see it. I could not fancy her mounting gracefully, like a young lady. Doubtless she was decrepid and crooked, like an old witch, and weighed down by the weight of so many rings on her fingers and bells on her toes. She could scarcely have been able to move. Probably she was assisted by "all the king's men." Accordingly I had a mental vision of the old lady, all higgledy-piggledy, and amazingly wrinkled and ugly, being lifted on horseback most assiduously by a group of men attired as beef-eaters, whilst a little regiment of men stood behind holding their halberds like the men in the procession that came out of the Brobdingnagian tape-box. The horse was white, of course, and caparisoned in white velvet embroidered with gold; and a page, clothed in white velvet and gold, stood holding the bridle. "Rings on her fingers" I could understand, but why "bells on her toes"? It was very peculiar and eccentric. If she had bells on her toes, she could not have worn shoes

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—neither a long habit, for they were to “make music wherever she goes.” Her dress must have been an ordinary one, and her feet just visible. No doubt the bells were of gold. Perhaps some one

So prejudiced, it was not difficult to detect, in the concluding line, something darkly mysterious, “And she shall have music wherever she goes.”

Where was she going? That was the culminating



AMUSING BABY

told me so, or perhaps I inferred it myself from the fact of rings being gold. I conceived a prejudice against the lady. It was sufficiently unpleasant for her to be old; but to have bells on her toes, and to have them jingling wherever she went, was so unconventional that I took exception to it as unfeminine and unchristian, and looked upon it as I might now upon the strong-minded feminine movement. I regarded the old lady as an uncanny body.

question of the whole story. Nobody knew. Who was nobody? Where could she be going to want music the whole way? And sit on horseback in such a ridiculous style! Rings on her fingers up to the knuckle joint of every finger, thumb included, no doubt. And bells on her toes? Absurd. There were two paramount questions for ever returning, and never to be answered. Why did the old lady get on the white horse, and where did she ride to?

Every child may not be equally imaginative, but they all think and wonder a great deal, like the celebrated parrot, who did not speak, but thought all the more. There is more in their philosophy than is dreamed of by our cold reason.

To amuse baby children requires considerable histrionic art. Eloquence and action must be infused into all that is said. "A plain unvarnished tale" will not suffice to interest them. It is the manner in which the words are spoken that gives effect to the drama, or points to the tale. Various comic voices must be assumed, and sensational gestures descriptive of the words employed.

For instance, say quietly and tamely, as in ordinary reading:—

This little pig went to market;
This little pig stayed at home;
This little pig had roast beef;
This little pig had none;
This little pig cried, "Tweak! tweak! tweak!"

It will have little or no effect on a very young child.

But mark the difference. Take the baby hand in one of yours. Spread out the hand. Point to the thumb, and say decidedly, yet confidently—

1. "This little pig went to market." (*Grunt, and let it be an ordinary pig's grunt.*)

Point to the next finger and say, in the deepest bass you can assume—

2. "This little pig stayed at home." (*Give a morose bass grunt and frown.*)

Point to the next finger, and say, with an insinuating tone and smile, elevating your eyebrows and bowing—

3. "This little pig had roast beef" (*and add three quick little grunts of satisfaction.*)

Point to the next finger, and say, in a voice just ready to cry—

4. "This little pig had none." (*Give two slow grunts of weariness, and look ready to cry.*)

Then pointing to the little finger, say very pleasantly, in a shrill, droll voice, laughing meanwhile, "This little pig cried, 'Tweak! tweak! tweak!'" pinching and twirling the child's finger gently, as if you had hold of the pig's tail.

This makes a complete harmless little drama of the story of the pigs, and rouses baby's feelings, sensations, and ideas in a healthy manner. Five distinct emotions are raised: 1. Interest; 2. Fear; 3. Pleasure or sympathy; 4. Grief, almost to tears; 5. A sudden reversion to mirth, and "All's well that ends well," a great desideratum in baby estimation. We must remember, too, that the feelings during babyhood are ephemeral in the extreme, light and evanescent.

Babydom is but a land of shadows and dissolving views, and the emotions are equally volatile. In maturer childhood it is not always so. There are many children of whom we may well say, "The child is father to the man." Its sufferings are keener, its woes deeper, and often not to be redressed; its joys and its sorrows are absorbed into its very life; age and time, instead of intensifying such morbidly acute feelings, mellow and tone them down by the experience that darkness is not perpetual, every night has its morning, every cloud its silver lining. Increase of years brings the sense to prize the insignificance of the broken toys.

Some children remain in babydom much longer than others. Nay, some folks, especially some

women, live all their lives in babydom. Some of these perpetual babies are very silly, it is true, but there is a great deal that is beautiful in the character of many of them. They, of course, cease to play at such baby games as we bring forward now, but they are babies for all that, and have baby ideas and baby pleasures.

Very little babies may be amused alternately with a rattle and a knee-song; they are seldom attracted by a doll, but sometimes frightened at it till they get older. Set the child on the knee and dance it to the rhyme repeated with animation is the earliest receipt I can offer—such nursery rhymes as "Hush-a-baby bunting," "Rock-a-by baby," "Dickory-dock," "Ride a cock-horse," etc. Indeed, those who have the care of several babies may amuse them by saying the rhymes to the accompaniment of a rattle with four tongues of red cloth tied to the four corners, and a yellow one at the top, to give it a gay appearance as it is waved through the air.

"This is the way the ladies ride" is always popular with little ones about a year old; but only one, or at most two, can be entertained in that way at a time.

Most of our nursery rhymes are of great antiquity, and many of them were brought to England and Scotland by the Danes and Saxons, who still amuse their children with similar legends and jingles of rhyme.

I subjoin a few familiar rhymes, which, simple as they are, or, as wise people would say, stupid, are ever welcome in the nursery.

"BROW-BRINKY."

Eyes, nose, etc., are to be touched when this is said, and it will be found an excellent soother for a child commencing to cry.

Brow-brinky, eye-winky, chin-choppy, nose-noppy, cheek-cherry, mouth-merry.

Somewhat similar to this is "THE LORD MAYOR."

Here sits the Lord Mayor (touch the forehead); here sit his two men (touch the eyes); here sits the cock (touch the right cheek); and here sits the hen (touch the left cheek). Here sit the little chicks (touch the nose); here they run in (touch the mouth); chinchopper, chinchopper, chinchopper, chin (pinching the chin).

THE COBBLER.

A good verse to say if the child cries when its shoes are put on.

Cobbler, cobbler, mend my shoe,
Give it a stitch, and that will do.
Here's a nail, and there's a prod,
And now my foot is well shod.

HUSH.

Hush! hush! hush! hush!
I dance mine own child,
I dance mine own child;
Hush! hush! hush! hush!

THE MERCHANTS OF LONDON.

The merchants of London were mysteriously grand in days when the streets were paved with gold.

Dickery, dockery, popperty pet,
The merchants of London they wear scarlet;
Gold on the collar and silk on the hem,
Merrily march the merchant men.

THE MOUSE AND THE CLOCK.

Zickery, dickery, dock,
The mouse ran up the clock,
The clock struck one—down the mouse ran,
Zickery, dickery, dock.

FELTON.

The little priest of Felton,
The little priest of Felton,
He killed a mouse
Within his house,
And ne'er a one to help him.

DUCKS AND GEESE.

Titty tum tawty,
The ducks in the water;
Titty tum tawty,
The geese follow after.

Useful to persuade a child who dislikes the water to be washed.

TWENTY GEESE.

I went to see,
And saw twenty
Geese all of a row.
My glove I would give
Full of gold if my wife
Were as white as those.

LITTLE SHON:

Little Shon a Morgan,
Gentleman of Wales,
Came riding on a nanny goat
Selling of pig's tails.
Then let Shon gallop a trot, trot, trot.

BIRD'S EGGS.

The robin and the redbreast,
The robin and the wren,
If ye take out their nest
Ye'll never thrive again.
The robin and the redbreast,
The martin and the swallow,
If ye've touched one o' their eggs
Bad luck will surely follow.

These little rhymes will not only amply suffice to amuse children till they are two years old, but even much longer. At two, however, other methods may be employed which will convey instruction, still retaining the nursery songs for occasional use.

A number of children of two or three years of age may be very well diverted with "the well-known toys," "the dancing sailor," or the celebrated donkeys that have been advertised as creating "roars of laughter." If the child or children are in cradles, a string may be tied from one leg to another of the table, and a figure or two of this sort suspended from it. The string across is not to be quite tight, so that by attaching another string long enough to reach where she is sitting, the mother may, from time to time, renew the vibration by a dexterous pull.

Here is another way of amusing a child, or a whole room full of them, by a performance sure to have "a long run" in babydom. All that is wanted is a sheet of paper, four large highly coloured figures, and a couple of common rattles. A common green lamp shade will be better than the sheet of paper. Pin the four figures round the shade, fix the shade over the jack, which must be suspended from the ceiling by a rope, and have a weight attached, such as the kitchen scales will afford, or an

old flat-iron, to cause it to turn round. Below the weight set the rattles at the same distance with string. As the jack turns and shows the figures alternately, the rattles will knock against one another and make a noise.

A moving diorama may also be constructed by the help of two jacks enclosed by cardboard cylinders, and fixed at opposite sides of the room. For durability the panorama had better consist of paper pasted on calico. On this paste all the coloured pictures you can get—figures, birds, flowers, fruit, etc.—after having neatly cut them out. An end is to be fixed to either of the jacks. Roll up one to within the length required, then roll up the other, hang a weight on, and the performance will commence. When it is desired to stop the performance, the weights must be removed. For a charitable institution no doubt friends would be willing to contribute the necessary materials.

A simple way to amuse young children is by cutting rows of figures out of white paper, old letters, etc. The paper is folded as many times as the scissors will cut through, and a whole row of young ladies, or milkmaids with their pails, brought into existence by a single cut of the scissors. The two ends of the paper should be held, and the young ladies or milkmaids caused to dance on the table.

Children of two years to five years old can be taught to amuse themselves for hours by pricking pictures. Draw an outline of any object they can understand—a man, a woman, a house, a bird, a cat, a fireplace, etc., and fix the corners by four pins over a pincushion. Then show the child how to prick all round the outline with a pin, pricks at regular intervals. When finished, the pin-picture is held up to the light, which comes like rows of little stars through the pricks. Printed outlines for pricking can be bought at a small cost.

The Kinder Garten is eminently suited for amusing, training, and teaching very little children, especially when brought together in numbers. The little employments with sticks and peas are readily entered into by children from two to four years of age, and it is wonderful the ingenuity some of them soon begin to display. Of more value, whether at school or in the nursery at home, are various play games, such as "Here we go round the mulberry-tree," which promote healthy exercise and mirth.

If there be any reader who thinks this a trifling or useless paper, he is one who, with all his wisdom, would be thought dull and stupid by the nursery critics and judges, and is not likely to succeed in the useful art of amusing babies.

TYPHOON IN CHINA.

TYPHOON is a word derived from the Chinese characters, *Tâe* signifying "great," and *foong*, "wind," so that any severe storm is termed by the people of China a *tâe-foong*. But foreigners distinguish a typhoon from a strong gale as applicable to a circular storm of wind, equivalent to the hurricane or tornado of the West Indies, and to which meteorologists now give the generic name of cyclone, or a rotatory wind. This term applies to all such tempests, in whatever region they occur, whether on land or sea, as great eddies in the atmosphere—chiefly in tropical latitudes—when the strongest

currents of air assume a circular motion, just as a whirlpool may be seen in the water. Without going into an explanation of the law of storms, suffice it to say that the purport of this paper is to give some account of a cyclone, of great devastating power, both on sea and land, which occurred on the night of the 22nd and 23rd September, 1874, at Hong Kong and Macao and the surrounding waters.

After sunset on the first-mentioned day, the experienced foreign residents and native inhabitants of Hong Kong observed indications in the atmosphere of an approaching typhoon—a stifling air in the town and harbour of Victoria, and a lurid glare lighting up the precipitous heights of the island. It was just at the autumnal equinox, when the monsoon winds generally change from the south-west to the north-east, and at the time of year these tornadoes are expected, though they do not annually visit the colony. The Government engineers had prudently constructed a massive sea-wall as a bulwark to protect the “praya,” or marine parade, and the Queen’s Road, running parallel with the beach, from the encroachment of the sea. It was built of solid blocks of granite, each weighing at least a ton, and these were fastened together with cement and strong iron clamps. Beyond this sea-wall numerous stone and wooden jetties were built, of a substantial character, by the wealthy mercantile firms and steamboat companies, which had hitherto resisted the force of the sea during ordinary storms. But those who constructed these works never calculated on witnessing such a destructive tempest, which in the short space of twelve hours swept them away like chaff before the wind.

About seven o’clock the breeze, which had been blowing freshly before, now came down in sudden squalls over the town and shipping with great violence, warning every person ashore and afloat to look out for shelter from the coming typhoon. A large flotilla of Chinese junks tried to run into the adjacent creeks, while the foreign shipping let go extra anchors to try and ride out the tempest. But all to no purpose, for the strength of the wind and turbulence of the sea increased in intensity as the night wore on, adding by its darkness to the confusion and horror that prevailed. The junks were mostly capsized and sunk, many of them leaving no trace of their crews and cargoes, or were smashed to pieces by the drifting vessels which encountered them. Those who had relied on the shelter which had afforded them protection on former occasions were utterly mistaken in their calculations, for their craft were driven from the places of refuge, and large junks broke up like match-boxes, as an eyewitness expressed himself. One of the officers on board the Pacific mail steamer Alaska saw about a hundred junks founder nearly at once.

The foreign shipping became quite uncontrollable. Sailing vessels dragged their anchors or snapped their chain cables like wisps of straw, and drifted helplessly ashore. Steamers even found that the steam-power at their command, or the crew of a man-of-war, could not save them from destruction. Two Spanish steamers sank bodily off one of the wharves, in one of which ten of the crew and the captain were drowned, and from the other only a few were saved out of ninety persons, including a number of Chinese passengers. A British gun-vessel was driven high up on the shore, but the crew were saved: so also were the crews of three English sailing ships. The casualties which happened in

harbour could not be alleviated by assistance from the shore, and in the few instances where help was given, it was at the risk of lives more valuable than those which were saved. Much credit was due to some of the residents who succeeded in saving thirty-six people from the Spanish steamers. Others were not so fortunate in reaching the shore after their vessels were wrecked, and many lives were lost in making the attempt.

All this time the tempestuous sea was surging against the sea-wall and jetties, which could not withstand it, until the battering of the waves loosened the granite fabric, twisting the solid blocks from their foundation, and upheaving them on the strand as if they were corks. Several one or two-ton weight masses of stone were hurled thirty or forty yards across the parade into the road, and against the walls of the houses. In some instances as many as five or six blocks, still clamped together, were washed up in one huge mass. This terrible power of the storm-wave of the sea which accompanies a cyclone, is not merely the force of the waves raised by the wind. It is chiefly caused by the upheaving of the sea owing to the diminished pressure of the air in the centre as compared with what prevails at the outskirts of the typhoon. This is indicated by the barometer, where, if the difference be two inches of mercury, meteorologists calculate that the sea at the centre would be raised about three feet, being sustained at that height by the pressure all round. This increase of level, when occurring at high tide, and being increased still further by violent winds blowing in upon a centre, quite accounts for the advances made by the sea over the land.

The storm reached its climax about two o’clock in the morning. Shortly after that hour a squall of appalling violence swept down on the city and its affrighted inhabitants, howling and whistling through the streets and alleys, leaving everywhere traces of its destructive power. It was not only dangerous for persons to go out, but they risked their lives by staying in their dismantled houses. Calamity, ruin, and death ran riot and could not be restrained. Tiles, brick-bats, jalousies, verandahs, signboards, and even roofs of houses, were whirled through the sultry air, which was highly charged with dust, so that respiration was impeded. Houses in the Chinese quarter collapsed, and men, women, and children were smothered in the *débris*. In the European quarter fears were entertained that the City Hall and Clock Tower would be blown down, but they stood the brunt of the storm, only the clock stopped at thirty-five minutes past two.

About that time most of the destruction on shore took place. To the foreign warehouses and dwellings this was mostly slight, verandahs, shutters, and windows being smashed, but little damage done to the walls. With the Chinese tenements it was otherwise. As the storm raged whole stories were swept away in rapid succession. The narrow but lofty verandahs of the native hongs on Bonham Strand came down with a crash, so that the whole of the parade was strewn with boards, posts, furniture, and other articles a foot in depth. Thus, besides the misery spread by this calamity on the water, many were ruined by the destruction of property on shore, and few escaped without loss. Some of the stories told of the anxiety gone through by Europeans on that fearful night, are startling. One gentleman, whose wife was ill, had to carry her from room to

room, the roof being blown off one after another, and ultimately he had to find shelter in a neighbour's house, which stood the tempest better. Others with young families suffered greater suspense; and some instances occurred of children being ushered into the world amid the uproar and turmoil, and when large portions of the houses in which they were born had been blown away. Many were forced to leave their dwellings, and had to pass the remainder of the night in the lowest floors, or in the cellars, in hourly fear that their houses would be demolished by the fury of the wind. At length the typhoon passed its culminating point about three o'clock, and by six its rotatory motion carried it away from Hong Kong, to scourge some other parts of the Chinese coasts and waters, after having swept round the island and harbour for exactly twelve hours.

It was not until daylight revealed the details of the disastrous scene that it could be ascertained how severe had been the loss both of property and life. The damage to roads, streets, and terraces throughout the city was enormous. Queen's Road, Hollywood, Caine and Robinson Roads, were impassable from the trees which, uprooted or blown down, covered them in broken heaps. Throughout the western portion of the town verandahs and balconies were torn away in all directions, and half the umbrageous trees that beautified that quarter were demolished. Here stands Government House, which was much injured in the roof, and the mansions in its vicinity were damaged more or less. From this part the town is built up the precipitous slopes of Victoria Peak, which rises to a height of 1,000 feet, having a signal station on its summit, in connection with the shipping entering the harbour. The surveyor-general's house was here in ruins, its owner having had a narrow escape with his life. The harbour-master's office was unroofed, and so were those of the Sanitarium and Mountain Lodge—a cool retreat for residents in hot weather. The trees, garden-plots, and lawns which adorned the hill-residences were devastated, the stone seats even being displaced by the terrific force of the wind. The signal topmast and yard were swept away, and all the telegraph poles throughout the island blown down, so that communication by these means was cut off; and still worse, the gas company's premises sustained such damage that the supply was stopped for a couple of days and nights. The London Mission House suffered severely, many doors and windows being demolished, and of the Roman Catholic church only a doorway and a heap of bricks remained, while the hospital was unroofed. Everywhere was wreck and ruin among the handsome edifices that had adorned the town.

But the greatest scene of devastation was along the line of the sea-wall, the western front of which, together with the stone and wooden jetties, was destroyed. To the eastward, where the Chinese quarter of the town is situated, the shore presented a most extraordinary appearance. It was covered with granite blocks from the sea-wall, wreckage from the sea, sails, sacks, bags of sugar, vermicelli, and other kinds of perishable merchandise.

Not only were bodies being cast ashore in the harbour, but round the coast beyond the town and suburbs, which taxed the energies of the authorities in all directions to find decent burial for them. Moreover, out in the spacious estuary of the great West River, which separates Hong Kong from

Macao by a distance of forty-five miles, the water was strewn with wreckage and floating bodies. Vessels arriving in port, that either weathered the typhoon, or were beyond its vortex, reported meeting with dead bodies a long way out at sea. There was no chance of these receiving burial on shore, so that in all likelihood they became the prey of sharks and other voracious fish that inhabit the China Sea. Those who were lost in the harbour of Macao and the adjacent anchorages sent their quota ashore on the flood tide, as was the case in Hong Kong; so that the numbers of the drowned swelled from hundreds to thousands, in the track of the typhoon between the two colonies.

It has been estimated that the diameter of the rotatory current in a great typhoon is about three hundred miles at its source, after which it widens as it becomes expended. In this case there can be no doubt that the central vortex passed over these localities with its greatest intensity, the rotating wind blowing from 100 to 130 miles an hour. But the whole body of the storm would probably not travel more than twenty or thirty miles an hour, in a south-westerly direction, so that it was a couple of hours or so before its central part reached Macao after leaving Hong Kong. The accounts of the typhoon at the former place are not so precise as those from the latter, but they are sufficient to show that the loss of life and property was equally great.

A correspondent of the "China Mail" at Macao thus briefly but graphically described this terrible visitation to that oldest and most picturesque foreign settlement in China:—"A most dreadful calamity has befallen this town—it is now a heap of ruins. Its beauty is gone, its prosperity checked, and desolation is everywhere. On the evening of the 22nd the appearance of the atmosphere and the indications of the barometer gave sure signs that something serious was brewing, and that a typhoon was to be feared. The wind was not strong, however, but the sea was high, and although not yet tempestuous, there was a sound of awful menace in the moan with which it broke on the shore. The blowing of the wind steadily increased from the north quarter, and at midnight the inner harbour began to be a scene of destruction, the junks losing their moorings, striking each other and being smashed to pieces. A Chinese gun-boat capsized on this occasion with three Englishmen on board. In the town the roofs of the houses began to move, and tiles flew about like hail. Every moment the wind grew stronger, the barometer steadily falling. Suddenly the wind veered to the east. Then the sea, which had been rising gradually, increased to an enormous wave, overleaping its usual limits, and struck in a body with tremendous force the whole course of the Praya Grande. The water rushed into the houses, the quays were destroyed, the large granite stones were hurled about, the guns of the batteries dismounted and borne like corks on the infuriated waves, and junks were smashed against the buildings. In less than an hour the work of destruction was accomplished. Every house was invaded by water and battered down; the spray flew over Government House and the houses to the south of the Praya, which were reduced to a shapeless heap of stone and brick.

"The desolation of the town now reached its acmé. The crash of falling houses, the screaming of the victims, the terrible roar of the wind and of the sea—all this was something awful to witness. Suddenly

an ominous glare appeared in the heavens. Fires had broken out in different parts of the town, and the flames, whipped on by the gales, rushed in horizontal streams over the largest squares, devouring buildings that stood even at great distances in their direction. On this occasion the loss of life was fearful. People had only to choose their death by water, fire, or the shock of falling buildings, but death was everywhere. Many persons who were hidden in the furthest recesses of their houses found themselves suddenly involved by the flames and perished miserably."

Next day the scene of desolation presented to the inhabitants who had survived the calamity was similar to that exhibited in the town and harbour of Victoria at Hong Kong. At Macao there are two harbours, formed by a narrow peninsula, but each threw up its quota of victims in hundreds at every flow of the tide. The police and Portuguese soldiers gathered them together, and, in order to avoid a pestilence, the bodies were burnt at the outskirts of the town, as it was impossible to obtain hands to bury them.

To sum up the effects of this terrible typhoon, it was calculated that not less than 8,000 persons lost their lives between the two colonies. The value of the property destroyed in Macao was not stated; but persons well able to judge estimated that in Hong Kong alone the property lost, in the form of vessels, damage to houses, buildings, and goods destroyed, was not less than a million sterling.

During the continuance of the typhoon, barometrical readings were noted down by several observers at Hong Kong, with mercurial and aneroid barometers, all of which show that the lowest point was between two and three o'clock on the morning of the 23rd, when the greatest devastation prevailed. The following table was furnished to the Government by Captain Thomsett, R.N., the readings being made in the observatory on the heights, but here reduced to the sea-level:—

7.45 p.m., 22nd September, 1874	...	29.63
9.15 "	"	29.57
10.15 "	"	29.45
10.30 "	"	29.40
12.30 "	"	29.12
1.00 a.m., 23rd "	"	29.05
1.12 "	"	29.00
1.30 "	"	28.95
2.00 "	"	28.88*
3.00 "	"	29.04
3.35 "	"	29.22
4.10 "	"	29.32
5.00 "	"	29.49
5.40 "	"	29.53
8.15 "	"	29.80
9.30 "	"	29.84

S. M.

OMNIBUS CONDUCTORS.

THE omnibus is everybody's coach and pair, ready to take anybody anywhere at all times of the day, and far into the night as well. It is an immense convenience, as we all know, and we hail it as a friend in times of emergency, in spite of its close quarters and its occasional stifling and stuffy flavour. But though so many people ride in it, few, probably,

* The fall of the barometer in the South of England between Saturday, Nov. 23, and Sunday, 29, in twelve hours was from 29.49 to 28.60. At noon on the 29th the *La Plata* was lost in the Bay of Biscay. The same observer (at Exeter) registered a fall from 29.35 to 28.58 on the 30th November, 1872.

are aware of the careful provisions that are made for their comfort and convenience; and it may, therefore, interest our readers to know what these are, and what are the precise relations that exist between them and the conductor, who is the ruling spirit of the "Buss," and to whose guardianship they are consigned. It is not to be imagined that we are guilty of any breach of trust in setting down the following items of information, since we merely condense them from the manual of printed regulations circulating among the hired servants of the London General Omnibus Company.

In the first place, then, it is the conductor's business, before starting on his daily route, to see that his vehicle is clean and neat both within and without—that the box and roof cushions are in good order and in their places, and that good aprons are provided for covering the legs and feet of the outside passengers. With regard to the inside, he is to see that the proper cushions are in place, and free from dirt or dust; that the mat for the floor is clean and rightly laid down; that the sides, roof, and windows are clean; that the advertisement bills are neatly arranged and fastened up; that the fares are painted correctly on the door, and that the number of the omnibus corresponding with the number of the plate outside is visible inside. He must also provide himself with small change; and he is bound before darkness comes on to have his lamp burning in its proper place.

The vehicle being ready to start, the conductor, being responsible for its daily course, must see that it starts punctually at the appointed time, not only in the morning, but at every starting-point and period throughout the day; and at the termination of the day's run must accompany it to the yard, and on the following morning must report in writing to the foreman any casualty, the finding of any property, or other circumstances that may have occurred.

The proper place for the conductor is on the foot-board, where he should stand with his back to the omnibus, on the look-out for passengers. He should not stand on the step, but on starting may stand on the ground to assist passengers entering. When hailed, he should direct the driver to pull up to the kerb on the near side of the road if the person hailing him is on that side, otherwise the driver must be directed to pull up as conveniently as he can for the passenger by avoiding the mud and wet. When more persons hail than there is room for, those who come first are to have the preference. The conductor must not signal the driver to proceed before the passenger is seated, or has firm hold of the handrail; and he must not slam the door or strike the panel as a signal, but call out or whistle to the driver. He must pay instant attention to any passenger desiring to be set down, and must direct the driver to pull up at the kerb if possible, so that the passenger may not have to alight in the road. He must endeavour to prevent persons from alighting while the omnibus is in motion, and if any one insists on so doing, he should warn him to alight with his face towards the omnibus. He should descend from his footboard to assist any passenger alighting, and he is bound to treat both passengers and the public generally with civility and respect, answering any inquiry they may make, and in case he is unable to give the information required, referring them to any person or place where they can obtain it. He is not to enter into discussions with the public, and should even yield to

any unjust requirement rather than give rise to altercation; and he is liable to instant dismissal for striking or verbally abusing a passenger. On the other hand, he can deal with a brawling passenger who is annoying others by calling in the aid of the police—a measure to which, however, he is warned not to have recourse, save in extreme cases, and when all his powers of persuasion have failed.

Passengers in dirty habiliments, or otherwise offensive, are not to be admitted to the inside; they may, however, mount to the outside if there is no one there to object; and the conductor is to see that they do not soil the cushions or aprons so as to render them disagreeable to other persons coming after them. Persons in a state of intoxication must not be allowed to use the omnibus at all. Further, the conductor must not take more passengers than the prescribed number, and must permit no one to ride on the step; and if any person insist on so doing, he must stop the omnibus and not allow it to proceed until such person has alighted—and he may call the police to assist in the removal of such offender if there be occasion.

Dogs must not be allowed to ride, unless they are in the charge of ladies who carry them, and even then they can only be admitted after the conductor has learned by inquiry that none of the passengers object. Parcels and packages that might inconvenience passengers are not allowed to be carried inside.

The conductor must not leave his omnibus during its journey, except to escort a female passenger to or from the pavement, or to perform some act contingent on the service, and in any case he must return to it as quickly as possible; and he is strictly forbidden to enter a public-house, or to drink or smoke on his journey. He is forbidden to ride inside his omnibus on any part of his route, or to enter into conversation with his passengers unless addressed by them, in which case he is to answer with respect and civility, and abstain from any approach to familiarity. Should an accident happen resulting in personal injury, or any other casualty, he must render all the aid in his power to extricate the driver from the difficulty, or relieve or assist any person endangered or injured. In case of injury to person or property, he should secure the names and addresses of any disinterested witnesses, that their evidence may be obtained in case of need, and must report the particulars of the affair to the foreman. If he find any property left in his omnibus, he is bound to deposit it at the nearest police-station, according to law.

From one rather pregnant regulation, which gives us a somewhat higher idea of the conductor's responsibility than we have been accustomed to entertain, we learn that he is forbidden, on pain of instant dismissal, to pay any fees, gratuities, or moneys of any kind to drivers, timekeepers, horsekeepers, or any other person whatsoever, whether in the service of the Company or otherwise. He must not pay the driver the amount of his wages until the *end of the day*, he must not advance him any sum on account during the day, but he must pay in to the company's account the whole amount of the fares taken throughout the day, without any deduction whatever, except the wages of the driver and himself, and the amount of the turnpike tolls; any deviation from this regulation will constitute a fraud, and be treated as such according to law. Some black sheep must be expected among so large a body of men, and the

opportunities for dishonesty are great, notwithstanding all contrivances to check the takings.

It must often have occurred to those in the habit of using omnibuses that the absence of the conductor in his place in the morning would be a rather awkward thing. By the regulations of the Company, however, it never can happen that the omnibus conductor is wanting. The service is maintained in efficiency by a system of supernumeraries, some of whom are always in attendance at the starting-points, to supply the place of any regular conductor who should fail to arrive, either from sickness or any other cause. In fact, all the conductors have entered on their office in the first instance as supernumeraries, and they are not received into this class unless they have first obtained a badge and licence from the metropolitan police, and are able to write a clear and legible hand.

All the above regulations appear to us excellent. That they work well is evident from the generally civil and considerate conduct of the London omnibus conductors, and which, for our part, we are glad to take this opportunity of acknowledging. Time was when no such acknowledgment was due, but the competitors for public patronage have long since found out that it does not pay to abuse and inconvenience a customer—and that it does pay to be courteous and obliging.

One word in conclusion, in reference to drivers as well as conductors, to whom the regulations upon which we have commented chiefly apply. The work of the omnibus servants is hard, and the pay not large. They deserve the sympathy of the public and the consideration of their employers. It is not for us to suggest how this consideration can be shown, but as a general principle, in all relations of capital and labour, the best and most profitable service is obtained when generous dealing softens the harsh laws of supply and demand. Let the London General Omnibus Company, on the whole an admirably administered corporation, treat their horses well, as horses ought to be treated, and also their men as men.

Varieties.

BELLMAN ON SUNDAY.—A correspondent at Tayport, Fifo, N.B., writes :—"In a recent part of the 'Leisure Hour' I observe a paragraph describing a singular custom which prevails in Holyhead, where a walking bellman summons the people to church. It may perhaps interest some of your readers to know that the same custom prevails in the little ancient burgh of Crail, near the East Neuk o' Fifo, and for much the same reason. The sound of the church-bell is intercepted by a high wall which now encloses a house and garden, occupying the site of what used to be a favourite hunting-lodge of that 'sair saunt o' the crown,' David I. The bellman in this case perambulates the lower streets of the burgh with a large hand-bell every Sunday morning, an hour before church-time. The townspeople are sometimes twitted by their neighbours about being a very benighted race for requiring to be reminded when Sunday comes round."

TRUST IN DIVINE PROTECTION.—I know a village down in the far West, where the 121st Psalm was a favourite, and more than a favourite. Whenever it was given out in church—and the congregation used often to ask for it—all joined in singing it, young and old, men and maidens, with an earnestness, a fervour, a passion, such as I never heard elsewhere; such as showed how intensely they felt that the Psalm was true, and true for them. Of all congregational singing I ever heard,

never have I heard any so touching as those voices, when they joined in the old words they loved so well :—

Sheltered beneath the Almighty wings
Thou shalt securely rest,
Where neither sun nor moon shall thee
By day or night molest.
At home, abroad, in peace, in war,
Thy God shall thee defend ;
Conduct thee through life's pilgrimage
Safe to thy journey's end.

Do you fancy these people were specially comfortable, prosperous folk, who had no sorrows, and lived safe from all danger, and therefore knew that God protected them from all ill? There was hardly a man who joined in that Psalm but knew that he carried his life in his hand from year to year, that any day might see him a corpse—drowned at sea. Hardly a woman who sang that Psalm but had lost a husband, a father, a brother, a kinsman—drowned at sea. And yet they believed that God preserved them. They were fishers and sailors, earning an uncertain livelihood, on a wild and rocky coast. A sudden shift of wind might make, as I knew it once to make, sixty widows and orphans in a single night. The fishery for the year might fail, and all the expense of boats and nets be thrown away. Or in default of work at home, the young men would go out on voyages to foreign parts : and often never came back again, dying far from home, of fever, of wreck, of some of the hundred accidents which befall seafaring men. And yet they believed that God preserved them. Surely their faith was tried, if ever faith was tried. But as surely their faith failed not, for—if I may so say—they dared not let it fail. If they ceased to trust God, what had they to trust in? Not in their own skill in seamanship, though it was great : they knew how weak it was, on which to lean. Not in the so-called laws of nature ; the treacherous sea, the wild wind, the uncertain shoals of fish, the chances and changes of a long foreign voyage. Without trust in God, their lives must have been lives of doubt and of terror, for ever anxious about the morrow ; or else of blind recklessness, saying, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Because they kept their faith in God, their lives were for the most part lives of hardy and hopeful enterprise ; cheerful always, in bad luck as in good ; thankful when their labours were blessed with success ; and when calamity and failure came, saying with noble resignation—"I have received good from the hand of the Lord, and shall I not receive evil? Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."—*Canon Kingsley.*

ISLAM.—Under the title of "Islam, its History, Character, and Relations to Christianity," there appeared some years ago one of the best treatises, at once learned and popular, on the religion of the Koran. The author, the Rev. Dr. J. Mulheisen Arnold, formerly a missionary in Northern India, and lately her Britannic Majesty's Consular Chaplain, Batavia, has long devoted his attention to this subject. Missionary zeal, while spreading the gospel among Jews and Pagans, has almost neglected the countries under the Mohammedan yoke. In fact, there has been too much of tacit approval of the faith of the Moslems, the good points of the system being magnified, and the bad points ignored. Let those who wish to know the truth about Islam consult Dr. Arnold's book. The number of Mohammedans is at least two hundred millions. In India alone there are fifteen millions, Queen Victoria ruling over as many Moslem subjects as the Sultan himself, or any other Moslem ruler. Of the social and moral results of the Moslem religion, let the degraded state of the people testify, in lands where the Koran speaks and not the Bible. What it has done in Africa the readers of Livingstone's travels too well know. (See *ante*, p. 160.)

SCIENTIFIC ZEAL OF WEALTHY ENGLISHMEN.—M. Wilfrid de Fonvielle, in a lecture delivered in Paris before a large assembly, expressed himself in the following terms on private enterprise in England :—"At Cambridge we were present at the inauguration of a great laboratory for chymistry, a gift of the Duke of Devonshire, which will cost no less than half a million of our money. From Cambridge we went to Newcastle to observe a great comet which French astronomers had discovered. We found in the heart of a province, at a great distance from the capital, a glass of much greater magnifying power than any in Europe. It had cost nearly as much as the Duke of Devonshire's laboratory, and yet it had been manufactured at the expense of a wire merchant. On returning from Newcastle we went to Greenwich, where we met Lord Lindsay, who was getting up with the most minute care at his own expense an expedition for observing the transit of Venus. At the Royal Society we made the acquaintance of a rich brewer, Mr. Lassell, who had become an astronomer in order to study the nebulous

stars in the isle of Malta, and who had explored beyond the limits which the great Herschel traced for the study of celestial space. We visited minutely, in the middle of Richmond Park, a magnetic observatory unrivalled in Europe, which will serve as a model to the one we have begun in the gardens of the Paris Observatory. This establishment was given to the British Association by a manufacturer of coloured paper. The French banker who was with us at Cambridge, electrified by these examples, spontaneously offered an important sum to the Paris Observatory, in order that a laboratory similar to the one belonging to Cambridge should be at once constructed ; but this offer necessitated the formality of a Government decree before the 30,000 francs could be accepted. The Budget Commission will have to authorise the expenditure of the money which has been forwarded to the Treasury."

CHINESE VERSION OF HERSCHEL'S ASTRONOMY.—The "Elements of Astronomy," by Sir John F. W. Herschel, has for many years been known in China, and the first edition of the Chinese translation is out of print. A second edition, translated from the tenth English edition, has been recently published at Shanghai. A short memoir of Herschel is prefixed, the portrait accompanying which, and some of the astronomical illustrations, are from electrotype copies of engravings in the "Leisure Hour." The translator of the work is Mr. A. Wylie, of Shanghai, but the whole of the manuscript has been revised by Le Shen-lan, the collaborator in the former edition, who is now Professor of Mathematics in the Peking University. The engraving of the Chinese characters was superintended in London by Mr. Thomas Jenner, by whom also some of the illustrations have been contributed. Stories are told of the Chinese going out with cymbals and gongs to frighten the dragon which swallows the moon during an eclipse : this may be true, as also it may be true that some of the English peasants think the moon is made of green cheese ; but it may be new to some readers to learn that Herschel's Astronomy is a favourite book among men of learning and science in China.

VENTILATION.—Lord Kinnaird, in a letter to a Dundee paper, gave some hints, which seem as much needed in Scotland as in England, as to ventilation :—"The foul air emitted from the lungs of the occupants of a room ascends while warm, but when cold it falls to the ground. Any one taking a ladder and going to the top of a room where a number of people are sitting would find the vitiated air unbearable. A bird could not long live in it. Where there is a fireplace in a room, the foul air first ascends, and then when it gets cool descends, and is then drawn up the chimney, so that a person sitting near the fireplace inhales this bad air. The remedy is to take off the vitiated air at the ceiling by a syphon acting on the reverse system of a water syphon. Where there is no fireplace in a room the case is serious indeed. We found that a bird placed on the floor of such a room, where two people slept, was dead in the morning. Were not our ancestors wise in having high bedsteads?—and they were higher than the iron bedsteads now commonly used. 'Shakedown's' are therefore most injurious to health. The great difficulty in ventilation is to make the air to move. One plan may be seen carried out on a large scale in the Houses of Parliament. A huge furnace at the top of the house, kept constantly burning, draws its life from the houses, libraries, dining-room, tea-rooms, committee-rooms, and kitchen of the Palace of Westminster, and such is its power that burnt pieces of paper have been drawn from far distant places to the Palace. The real difficulty is the supplying of fresh air to fill up the vacuum, which in our dwellings is drawn from the window sashes, and door, and keyholes."

POLAR EXPLORATION.—Captain Parry reached the highest point yet touched in Arctic exploration. The expeditions which have succeeded in reaching and passing the line of 81 degrees north latitude are : Parry, 82.45, in sledges ; Hall, 82.15, in steamer *Polaris* ; Austrian Expedition, 82.5, in sledges ; Swedish Expedition, 81.45, in steamer ; Scoresby, 81.30, in sailing ship ; Leigh Smith, 81.24, in sailing ship *Samson* ; Koldeway, 81.5, in sailing ship ; Parry, 81.5, in sailing ship *Hecla*.

COMMONS ENCLOSURE.—By the decision of the Master of the Rolls in the Epping Forest case, a great point was gained as to securing commons rights, and especially open spaces for health and recreation near the huge and ever-growing metropolis. Irrespective of Epping Forest, there are about sixty commons within fifteen miles of London, averaging 130 acres each, and upwards of 120 small open spaces averaging about ten acres. Without an Act of Parliament no enclosure by a lord of a manor can henceforth be legally made.

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